



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE CHILD-MIND AND CHILD-RELIGION

PROFESSOR EDWIN DILLER STARBUCK, PH.D.
State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUALITY

Whatever else it consists in, "spirituality" involves the normal development of each of the various native endowments of the child, after the manner described in the preceding article. Each of these must be refined by being carried up onto a higher "level" of consciousness. If any lies dormant, or if it lack enrichment through increased complexity and through a heightening of the objects of consciousness—there results crassness or bestiality. Instead of hungering after righteousness, there is gluttony; instead of responsiveness to beauty, sensuality; instead of seeking treasures in heaven, miserliness; and so on throughout. Spirituality likewise demands symmetry. The various elements of the mental life must be in the right proportion. An impulse beautiful in itself, or when properly blended with the other elements of consciousness, is a blemish when in excess. The humility of Uriah Heep, the charity that gives indiscriminately, and the self-effacement of the ascetic are to be curbed.

Spirituality implies, also, just such a functioning of each of the instincts and impulses as will bring the child into harmonious relationship with the outside world. The external order with which the child is to become adjusted, usually with friction and difficulty, presents itself in two aspects: that of persons and that of an ideal world of possible personal fulfilment. The feeling after adjustment to the one has given rise to morality, the other, religion. It will be profitable to consider these separately for a moment.

Morality, in so far as it is an instinct, exists for the sake of personal and social adjustment. Stated negatively, the principle is that were life so simple and constant that, to use Spencer's dictum, the inner and outer relations needed no progressive adjustment, there would be no consciousness; furthermore, were it so definite and trustworthy in all its responses, now that it has once grown complex, that there

were no maladjustments between the individual and other persons and so no longing for a restoration, there would be no conscience and no morality. So far from this being the case, the harmony is threatened at every waking moment through the never-ceasing interplay of a bundle of impulses and a multiplicity of external situations. The child would not steal; but the sweetmeats or the pieces of money are just there, and taking a little will make no difference; he would not lie, but the mishap is trying to his pride, and coloring the facts a little is no real falsehood; he understands fair play and honor; but the thoughtless friend richly deserves a punishment the infliction of which need not be in the open—such, in thousand-fold ways are the ever-recurring temptations through which the harmony of the individual and social group is broken. Again, perfect adjustment at one time or age is no security against later strain and tension. Life means growth and change. The quality of life fitted to one environment may be at variance with the next. The high degree of self-regard in children and animals is normal in a low plane of development when existence depends solely upon the strength of its individual units, but is abnormal when, later, social responsiveness and co-operation have become primary virtues, among the gregarious types. A reconstruction to fit the new conditions is demanded in such a case; this means conflict, for the direction of life is already fixed through a set of personal habits and by race habits or instincts, which hold the child's life almost irrevocably in the direction of the old responses. At the same time the demands of society are insistent and inviolable. Its new criteria of conduct are so firmly established in custom and proclaimed through creeds, doctrines, and the unwritten social codes to such a degree that they dare not be disobeyed. Hence it is that the old race life and the "ideal" life of the present and future are both claiming the soul of the child as their own. It is in the midst of this forced warfare between the individual and the social aggregate that the moral sense of the child is awakened.¹

¹ For a description of the process of moral development through the interplay of these two aspects of the self, the racial and the social, the reader is referred to the volume *Social and Ethical Interpretations*, by James Mark Baldwin. From the discussion above, it will be evident that the conflict is not simply between the "self of habit" and the social self or "self of accommodation," but between any impulse and the total self with which it must be in consonance, when that impulse threatens the

The moral life bears unmistakable marks of such an origin. Conscience, its monitor, is something that pricks or gnaws, or, in turn, it is something that feels guilt as would a person in the act of reaping a penalty for a misdeed. The moral life is described in terms of a fight or struggle or battle. In nearly all sacred literature the warfare is objectified, as being carried on between God and Satan or a god and a demon. Remorse has its setting in terms of tears, pain, and failure.

Although the conflict is a varied one, there is no doubt that it has centered in the opposition between the narrowly personal self and the social self, just as Baldwin and other students have said. Conscience is apt to be a "voice," which is an abstraction from the precepts, commands, and threats of those in all ages who have held authority over the individual, and of the cutting gossip of the multitude. It may be "seared," as though it were a hypersensitive thing which should respond quickly to every touch, but which may, like a sore, be burned over or otherwise made callous. Moral "responsibility" is the quality of responding to the suggestions and wills of others. "Duty" implies a debt to one's fellows. The term "morality" itself involves "mos," custom, and means that one is keeping pace with his fellows and observing strictly the standards they have set.

In the midst of the difficulties of personal and social adjustment there have arisen many secondary or derived instincts, such as modesty, courage, knighthood, civility, propriety, jealousy, and love. The moral sense may, in one of its aspects, be regarded as one among these derived instincts, the most abstracted and highly organized of them all, whose function is to insure a right relationship between the individual and the social group. It may be called, therefore, a *regulative* instinct, a term which Marshall has applied to religion,² but which might with even greater appropriateness be given to morality. It

harmony through being too strong or too weak. The most adequate presentation of the various phases of the conflict is perhaps, that of Josiah Royce, "On Certain Psychological Aspects of Moral Training," *International Journal of Ethics*, Vol. III, pp. 413 ff. "The moral life [says Royce] is essentially a life of conflict, of conflict between humane and narrowly selfish impulses, of the conflict between reason and caprice, between order and chaos, yes, and of the conflict between the two moral motives themselves (self-sacrifice and self-perfection) which ideally ought always to harmonize, but which in our blindness we do harmonize so ill."

² H. R. Marshall, *Instinct and Reason*, New York, 1898.

centers in the craving after personal wholeness, wherever the integrity of the social self is threatened, and is a reflection of the judgments of society upon the quality of conduct in the individual consistent with its own well-being.

Religion has a somewhat different source. The person is not only surrounded by a social group, but becomes aware of an ideal world of possible personal fulfilment and of the attainment to perfect truth, goodness, and beauty. He grows dimly conscious of a permanence in the midst of change, conservation in the midst of apparent defeat and evil, and of the real amidst the fleeting and phenomenal. The feeling after a harmonious adjustment to the total reality has given rise primarily to the religious impulse. "Spirituality" is in terms of this ideal adjustment. Indeed religion is this higher refinement and ideal adjustment in the process of making. It is somewhat later than morality in its development and supplements it. If morality consists in a high degree of abstraction from a feeling of specific duties into a sense of moral obligation and into conscience, the abstractions that furnish the content of religion are even greater. The reaches of consciousness are vaster in every direction. There is a preperception not only of ends but of supreme ideals of personality and of truth. The limits of time and space begin to stretch away to eternity and infinity. The finite relates itself to the absolute. The race memories that speak through conscience begin to assume the majesty of the voice of a deity. The youth becomes faintly conscious of "the unregarded river of his life," that courses through him, and deep answers to deep in his heart. His life, in so far as it is conscious and purposeful, is centered upon the present and its engrossing occupations.

Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul's subterranean depth upborne.
As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs, and floating echoes.

These deeper soundings of the soul are felt as a sense of sin—a universal and not simply a Christian phenomenon—if the life is not yet attuned to them; they come as remorse when the mass of smaller impulses are about to sweep them away; they break forth as longing, aspiration, hope, love, and joy when the heart responds to them, and

open up new vistas of freedom to the personal life. The religious life centers in this

added dimension of emotion, this enthusiastic temper of espousal, in regions where morality strictly so called can at best but bow its head and acquiesce. It ought to mean nothing short of this new reach of freedom for us, with the struggle over, the keynote of the universe sounding in our ears and everlasting possession spread before our eyes.³

Each person from the day of birth is guided in his behavior by the deeper life of the race that speaks through a set of instincts. He is carried on safely into a fairy world of untried experiences and of attainments that he can in no wise foresee. The response of the devotee to the impulses of religion is like that of the child or animal to the deeper promptings of instinct. Religion is, indeed, the deepest seated of all the instincts, reaching back into the profoundest experiences of the race and leading mankind onward into new reaches of perfection and guiding it into fields of truth where the path has not yet been made plain through custom and precept.

Religion does not, however, become so abstracted from actual experiences that it can lead on independently of them. It is, in fact, the tersest of records of the successes and failures of specific kinds of action. It finds its rise in a conflict that grows out of the warring of the impulses and instincts, each of which would in turn conquer the personality and gain entire possession of consciousness. Stated negatively again, were life so simple, the instincts so few, of so direct response, and so trustworthy that the symmetry and harmony of consciousness were never broken, religion would not exist. Such is the case only with the lowest savages, animals, and children. Walt Whitman wrote:

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contained;
 They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
 They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
 They do not make us sick discussing their duty to God,
 Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things,
 Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived a thousand years ago,
 Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.

The author of these lines was not able to attain the placidity and serenity he coveted, just because he was a man and not an animal. He was great among his kind by virtue of the fact that he longed and

³ William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 48.

struggled and strove after perfection and freedom. These were ever receding ideals as his richly developing and ramifying life sought ever anew to attain wholeness. He who held up the sparrow that had no care for its food, and the lily that toils not nor spins, as ideals of character, saw the heights and depths, toiled and sorrowed and felt the tragedy of the world as have few, if any, other creatures. It looks as if the geniuses of religion had attained spirituality almost in proportion to the strain, tension, and struggle going on within, which are progressively resolved into wholeness and victory.

When the fight begins within himself,
Man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head;
Satan looks up between his feet. Both tug:
He's left, himself i' the middle; the soul awakes
And grows.

The conflict in religion is more varied than in morality. It concerns the organization of the personality at its deeper sources and at the points of its highest culmination. The soul is reaching out, not only into a world of persons but into rapport with the larger sphere of the absolute. This transcendent truth it interprets through a refined sensitivity, as it reaches out heartfully toward it in the attitudes of prayer and faith; it interprets it also through the discordant judgments of the collective mind as these are crystallized in creeds and religious codes; it interprets it yet again through the many-voiced instinctive promptings, and it is the rare personality in whom these sound forth with the unison of a symphony. The conflict is also more tragic than that of the moral life. Each act is judged by standards not always self-consistent, which seem to be and claim to be absolute. The cleavage of the self, as it is drawn between the high and low and the good and evil, is deeper. There are hopeless anomalies to solve. The person loves goodness but seeks the evil. He is impelled into unreason and apparently unreasonable modes of life. He is driven to forsake the certainties of sense and respond to unseen verities; he must rely upon faith and not upon perception and common-sense, believe in love as against law, and accept God and heaven in preference to the "world" and all forms of "worldliness."

The reader will forgive the abstractness in the foregoing discussion of what professes to be a specific problem in proportion as it has now

brought out into clear perspective what is at best a somewhat hazy and involved question, that of the religious culture of children. It is a simple truth that the business of the religious teacher and every parent is to take each child as a potential human being and lead it on into the fullest spiritual heritage of the race, until it becomes in turn a positive unit in the religious development of its kind, and it is not his business primarily to teach a given amount of this and that doctrine. Having seen the child as a complex unit composed of a group of instinct feelings and reactions capable of refinement and harmonization and having noticed the way religion springs up in race life as a means of harmonizing the personality within itself and guiding it in its progressive adjustment to the supersensuous reality about it, some aspects of the intricate problem will have come out into clearness.

The first of these is that, in the spiritual culture of the child, the absolute, or as religionists call it, God or the Divine Presence in the world, is to be made a living fact to him. It is one of the functions of religion to lead the mind on beyond its narrowly circumscribed existence and decentralize it through leading it to feel itself a part of a greater reality on which it depends and through which it finds its freedom. This is perhaps the first in importance and certainly the most difficult matter in religious education. How may the fact of this Divine Presence become a warm inner sense? How may its meaning not be covered up in a mere name? How may it not be cheapened by vain repetition? What are the steps by which the child may progress from a picture of God in terms of childhood imagery to a feeling of the God-life as an inner reality after which the heart yearns? This question will have to be put aside for later discussion, in connection with the stages of child-development.

A second fact is that the child is to be filled with rich experiences that are his own at first hand. There is no growth without conflict and no attainment without struggle. We have seen evidence in both morality and religion, of pain and joy, of heart-ache and deliverance, of struggle and victory. As this has been one of the conditions of the spiritual development of the race, so must it be in greater or less degree, in that of each person. Religion is not something that can be superimposed upon the mind of the child from without; it must be forged out within his own thought, feeling, and conduct. It is true that each

generation has a right to reap from the victories of past generations as these have been molded into the fixed forms of social behavior. Each person gathers in from the spiritual successes of his fellows through imitation of their ways and sharing unconsciously their tastes and ideals. These borrowed possessions will not, however, be wrought into the spiritual fiber of any child who does not try them out in the fires of his own personal experience. Royce, in the article previously quoted, gives a true analysis of this fact in the field of moral training:

The condition for the appearance of the conscientious type is precisely this complex condition: on the one hand a suggested social impulse; on the other hand a private impulse at war with the first; a conscious conflict between the two impulses; a victory of the social over the antisocial self. Imitativeness without such conflict develops no conscience. . . . No prudent guardian of a child will risk the young childish conscience by giving it unnecessarily difficult or numerous opportunities to go in this way wrong. And yet without successful feats of self-sacrifice of the sort now in general indicated, this motive of conscience never grows and conscientious ideas never get developed.

This truth, worthy of even greater emphasis in the more complex and profound life of religion, should be suggestive as weakening the tendency to inculcate into children ready-made religious conceptions and to practice the methods of the softer education that would guard children and youths from intellectual doubts and spiritual difficulties.

The third fact to mention is even more directly in line with the preceding discussion. The spiritual culture of children involves the refining and proper blending of the instincts. Religion exists as a race instinct, as a means of correcting, reshaping, and refining the other instinct tendencies. Through a refined sensitivity of feeling the religionist is able often to find his way in the search for truth and life when "the coarser tools of the intellect" would be helpless to direct him. These finer intimations of the collective mind, that this impulse needs refining, that one needs strengthening and still another needs repressing, constitute the life and message of religion. The guardian of the spiritual life of the child is to be a helper, more or less consciously, in this process. How shall he know when to stimulate and when to repress certain instincts? This is a marvelously involved question. He may assume the religious attitude himself, and depend upon a spiritual tactfulness to guide him into ways of wisdom and discretion. He may supplement his tact by a deeper insight into the meaning of religion as a world phenomenon. To use a single illustration, if it should

be understood that religion exists not simply to "regulate"⁴ or repress certain instincts, chiefest among them the self-regarding instincts, but also to *harmonize* the personality, which includes the refinement and proper interrelating of *all* the native endowments, many an otherwise discordant note in religion will seem harmonious. How can self-regard be at the same time a sin and a virtue? The strongest note of religion, in its ten commandments, in its prohibitions, in its precepts and anathemas, has been the suppression of selfishness. Its apparent gospel is one of humility, self-sacrifice, and self-effacement. The ascetics have made of this doctrine a creed and have claimed the great teacher as their leader. Many of the greatest spiritual teachers have held up the happiness and perfection of man now and in the future life as the chief message of religion, and have likewise claimed the Christ among their number. And rightly have they done so. Humility and meekness are no ultimate virtues. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "The meek shall inherit the earth." "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Religion is seen to be trying, not simply to be drawing lines of exclusion between this and that set of instincts, but to draw lines of demarkation between the lower and higher, the crass and spiritual expression of all the instincts.

The teacher of the child will be helped also by developing a higher tactfulness through a study of the historical development of religion. At one time the well-being of society demands the suppression of an instinct, at another age its emphasis. It may be that the asceticism of the Middle Ages had its utility in calling mankind away from luxuriousness and worldliness. It may also be that the hedonistic reaction of the Renaissance that emphasized the majesty of the individual and the virtue of happiness was likewise a wholesome reaction. In a similar way one feels the uses of the various historical reactions between rejoicing and sorrowing, fasting and feasting, authority and freedom, love and fear, phallicism and celibacy, each of which may have been an adjustment toward the higher life of humanity that only the religious impulse could bring about.

What the religious teacher shall do depends also upon the particular child and to what extent its native endowments coincide at each step in its development with that which seems normal for its age and in tune with the truth of religion.

⁴ The term used by H. R. Marshall in his *Instinct and Reason*.